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JANUARY 10

MR. ARTHUR ERWIN BROWN in the Chair.

Thirty-two persons present.

A paper entitled "New and Interesting Species in the Isaac Lea Collection of Eocene Mollusca," by Charles W. Johnson, was presented for publication.

The deaths of Francis M. Brooke and Mrs. Bloomfield H. Moore, members, were announced.

The Calaveras Skull.—MR. WILLIAM H. DALL called attention to the fact that the authenticity of the celebrated Calaveras skull, about which so much controversy had arisen in 1866, has recently again been called in question. It seemed to him, as the small number of persons who were cognizant of the facts when they occurred is already greatly reduced, that it would be desirable to put on record his own testimony as an eyewitness to some of them, which in his opinion are incompatible with the theory that a hoax had been perpetrated, or a skull from some recent burial place subject to the lime deposit from springs, fraudulently foisted upon Prof. J. D. Whitney and his associates in the State Geological Survey.¹

Mr. Dall described briefly the nature of the formations which make up the table mountains of the region alluded to, consisting of beds of basaltic lava more or less alternated with gravel, which fill the prehistoric stream beds in which gold was sought by means of tunnels from the side, or shafts from above, and which are now practically abandoned since the returns do not pay for the labor.

He was in California at the time of the discovery and in June, 1866, examined the skull, then in the office of the State Geologist, in the presence of Prof. Whitney, William M. Gabb, W.

¹ The main facts as thoroughly investigated at the time are given by Prof. Whitney in his work on the auriferous gravels of California, *Memoirs of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy* at Cambridge, Vol. vi, Part 1, pp. 267-273, 1879. The evidence has generally been regarded among scientific men as convincing and sufficient, the skull being shown by analysis to be in a fossilized condition, and to have been taken, according to his own statement, by a mine owner of respectability, from a bed of gravel 132 feet below the surface of the uppermost lava bed of Bald Hill, one of the "table mountains" of Calaveras County, Cal., and to have been so covered with cemented gravel that it was not recognized as a skull until the party to whom the original finder had given it in his presence, removed some of the covering, and that it passed without fee or reward into the hands of the State Geologist, who with his colleagues immediately investigated all the circumstances.